THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF PLANNING (SHRI V. NARAYANASAMY): (a) to (c) Special Category States Status has been accorded to some States by the National Development Council on the basis of a set of criteria that *inter alia* includes having a strategic location on the border with neighbouring countries, hilly and difficult terrain, inadequate economic and social infrastructure, predominantly large tribal population, and limited and weak resource base compared to development needs. Most States that have been granted Special Category Status during the last two decades have been created out of small Union Territories or from districts of some other States' necessitating creation of administrative infrastructure involving overheads cost that was out of proportion to their resource base.

There is no proposal at present before the Government for including Rajasthan in the list of Special Category States.

Employees in Planning Commission

723. SHRIMATI BRINDA KARAT: Will the PRIME MINISTER be pleased to state:

(a) the number of employees working in Planning Commission on daily wages since last 15-20 years;

(b) the nature of work being done by them; and

(c) the reasons for not regularizing their employment?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF PLANNING (SHRI V. NARAYANASAMY): (a) Six persons, who were working on daily wages in Planning Commission in 1993, are still working on daily wages. However, they were disengaged in 1993 and were reengaged in the years 1996, 1998 and 1999.

(b) They are doing casual nature of work such as shifting of furniture and office equipments etc.

(c) Their employment has not been regularized as per the existing Government instructions.

Gap between development in rural and urban sectors

724. DR. JANARDHAN WAGHMARE: Will the PRIME MINISTER be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government is aware of the fact that the gap between the rural and urban sectors is ever widening as far as development and growth are concerned;

(b) whether there are serious disparities in primary education and primary health facilities provided to urban and rural people; and

(c) if so, the steps taken to bridge the gap between development in rural and urban areas?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF PLANNING (SHRI V. NARAYANASAMY): (a) According to the information available from Central Statistical Organisation, Ministry of Statistics and Programme Implementation, Government of India, the per capita income measured in terms of Net Domestic Product (NDP) was Rs.5783 for the rural and Rs.13525 for urban areas in 1993-94, at current prices. The corresponding per capita incomes were Rs. 10606 and Rs. 30217 respectively for 1999-2000, at current prices. No information giving the rural-urban differences in income level is

available after 1999-2000. The per capita income measured in terms of per capita NDP for urban areas was 2.34 times higher than in the rural areas in 1993-94. The corresponding ratio for the year 1999-2000 was 2.85 times. As per the large sample surveys of the household consumption expenditure conducted by the National Sample Survey Organisation (NSSO), the per capita consumption expenditure in urban areas has been higher than in rural areas by 62% in 1993-94 (NSS 50th Round) and 88% in 2004-05 (NSS 61st Round). However, urban-rural gap in several indicators relating to development is observed to narrow down. The urban rural gap in the poverty ratio declined from 4.9 percentage points in 1993-94 to 2.6 percentage points in 2004-05. The urban rural gap in literacy rate declined from 28.4 percentage points in 1991 to 21.2 percentage points in 2001. The urban rural gap in infant mortality rate declined from 32 per thousand live births in 1997 to 24 per thousand live births in 2007.

(b) and (c) As per Seventh All-India Educational Survey (2002-03), conducted by National Council of Educational Research and Training (NCERT) the number of rural habitations that had a primary school within a distance of one kilometre was 87%. By 2007, about 98% of Indian villages/habitations have access to primary schools within a distance of one kilometre. As per the National Health Profile, 2007, the number of Government Hospitals (including Community Health Centres) and number of beds are provisionally estimated as 6955 and 154031 respectively in the rural areas and 3021 and 328491 respectively in the urban areas. The National Rural Health Mission (NHRM) has been set up with the objective of providing accessible, affordable, accountable and effective health care delivery especially to the poor and the vulnerable sections of the society and bridge gaps in health care in the rural areas. The Sarva Siksha Abhiyan (SSA), the principal programme for universal elementary education (UEE), is the single largest holistic programme addressing all aspects of elementary education. The Eleventh Five Year Plan aims at raising the growth rate of agriculture sector to 4% per annum during the Plan period. Various strategic measures have been incorporated in the Eleventh Plan for accelerating the agricultural output. These include doubling the rate of growth of irrigated area, improving water management, scaling up of irrigation potential creation, rainwater harvesting, ground water recharge, watershed development, focus on soil quality, diversification into high value outputs with adequate measures to ensure food security, promote animal husbandry and fishery, easy access to credit and improving market linkages by ensuring rural connectivity.

Special allocation for Jharkhand

725. SHRI PARIMAL NATHWANI: Will the PRIME MINISTER be pleased to state:

(a) whether any special planned allocation has been earmarked for the development of the States which have predominantly tribal population;

(b) if so, the States so identified and the allocation recommended for the development in the Eleventh Plan period; and

(c) being the new State, whether special allocation has been earmarked for Jharkhand for the development of mines and extraction of the natural resources of Jharkhand?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF PLANNING (SHRI V. NARAYANASAMY): (a) and (c) No, Sir.

(b) Does not arise.